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	UTUIT	γ		Attorney	Docket No.		

# PATENT APPLICATION TRANSMITTAL -(Only for new nonprovisional applications under 37 C.F.R. § 1.53(b))

First Inventor or Application Identifier Tiffany, Title Express Mail Label No. EK263331110US

APPLICATION ELEMENTS See MPEP chapter 600 concerning utility patent application content	Assistant Commissioner for Patents ADDRESS TO: Box Patent Application Washington, DC, 20231
Y     Submit an original and a duplicate for fee processing)	5. Microfiche Computer Program (Appendix)
2. X Specification [Total Pages to the low)	6. Nucleotide and/or Amino Acid Sequence Submission (if applicable, all necessary)
- Descriptive title of the Invention	a. Computer Readable Copy
- Cross References to Related Applications - Statement Regarding Fed sponsored R & D	b. Paper Copy (identical to computer copy)
- Reference to Microfiche Appendix	c. Statement verifying identity of above copies
- Backgroung of the Invention	ACCOMPANYING APPLICATION PARTS
- Brief Summary of the Invention	7. Assignment Papers (cover sheet & document(s))
- Brief Description of the Drawings ( <i>if filed</i> ) - Detailed Description	37 C.F.R.§3.73(b) Statement X Power of
- Claim(s)	(when there is an assignee) 12 Attorney
- Abstract of the Disclosure	9. English Translation Document (if applicable) Information Disclosure Copies of IDS
3. X Drawing(s) (35 U.S.C. 113) [Total Sheets 3	
4. Oath or Declaration [Total Pages 3	] 11. Preliminary Amendment
a. X Newly executed (original or copy)	12. X Return Receipt Postcard (MPEP 503) (Should be specifically itemized)
b. Copy from a prior application (37 C.F.R. (for continuation/divisional with Box 16 complete	§ 1.63(d)) Small Entity Statement filed in prior application.
DELETION OF INVENTOR(S)	13. X Statement(s) Status still proper and desired
Signed statement attached delet inventor(s) named in the prior appl	
see 37 C.F.R. §§ 1.63(d)(2) and 1.	
"NOTE FOR ITEMS 1 & 13: IN ORDER TO BE ENTITLED TO PAY SMALL FEES, A SMALL ENTITY STATEMENT IS REQUIRED (37 C.F.R. § 1.27), IF ONE FILED IN A PRIOR APPLICATION IS RELIED UPON (37 C.F.R. §	FXCEPT
16. If a CONTINUING APPLICATION, check appropriate bo	x, and supply the requisite information below and in a preliminary amendment:
Continuation Divisional Continuation-ii	
	closure of the prior application, from which an oath or declaration is supplied
	companying continuation or divisional application and is hereby incorporated by portion has been inadvertently omitted from the submitted application parts.
17. CORRESP	ONDENCE ADDRESS
Customer Number or Bar Code Label (Insert Customer No.	or X Correspondence address below
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Country USA Telephon	
Name (PrintType) Jeffrey L. Eichen	Registration No. (Attomey/Agent) 41,496
Signature	Date 4 76 00

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April 27, 2000

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AND TRADEMARK OFFICE

# VIA UNITED STATES EXPRESS MAIL DELIVERY

Assistant Commissioner for Patents Box Patent Application Washington, DC 20231

Re: Transmittal Letter for a Utility Patent Application

Dear Sir or Madam:

Enclosed please find the following documents for filing with the United States Patent and Trademark Office:

- 1. Utility Patent Application Transmittal
- 2. Utility Patent Specification and Claims (10 pages)
- 3. Drawings (3 pages)
- 4. Declaration for Utility Patent Application (3 pages)
- 5. Statement Claiming Small Entity Status -- Independent Inventor
- 6. Power of Attorney or Authorization of Agent
- 7. Fee Transmittal
- 8. Check
- 9. Postcard

Please process the enclosed documents and stamp and return the enclosed postage paid, self-addressed post card.

Jeffrey [] Eichen

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ffrey L. Eichen

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# STATEMENT CLAIMING SMALL ENTITY STATUS Docket Number (Optional) (37 CFR 1.9(f) & 1.27(b))--INDEPENDENT INVENTOR Applicant Patentee, orldentifier H. Robert Tiffany III Application or Patent No.: Filedorlssued: FURNITURE As a below named inventor. I hereby state that I qualify as an independent inventor as defined in 37 CFR 1 9(c) for purposes of paying reduced fees to the Patent and Trademark Office described in: the specification filed herewith with title as listed above. the application identified above. the patent identified above. I have not assigned, granted, conveyed, or licensed, and am under no obligation under contract or law to assign. grant, convey, or license, any rights in the invention to any person who would not qualify as an independent inventor under 37 CFR 1.9(c) if that person had made the invention, or to any concern which would not qualify as a small business concern under 37 CFR 1.9(d) or a nonprofit organization under 37 CFR 1.9(e). Each person, concern, or organization to which I have assigned, granted, conveyed, or licensed or am under an obligation under contract or law to assign, grant, convey, or license any rights in the invention is listed below: X No such person, concern, or organization exists. Each such person, concern, or organization is listed below. Separate statements are required from each named person, concern, or organization naving rights to the invention stating their status as small entities. (37 CFR 1 27) Lacknowledge the duty to file, in this application or patent, notification of any change in status resulting in loss of entitlement to small entity status prior to paying, or at the time of paying, the earliest of the issue fee or any maintenance fee due after the date on which status as a small entity is no longer appropriate. (37 CFR 1 28(b)) Robert Tiffany Barbara Y. Tiffany NAMEOFINVENTOR NAME OF INVENTOR fature of inventor Signature of inventor Date

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#### IN THE UNITED STATES PATENT AND TRADEMARK OFFICE

#### APPLICATION FOR UTILITY PATENT

Title:

**FURNITURE** 

Inventor:

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Barbara Yaseen Tiffany

Attorney:

Jeffrey L. Eichen, Esquire, Reg. No. 41,496

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## **Background of Invention**

## 1. Field of the Invention:

This invention relates to a piece of furniture, particularly one which is constructed out of a plurality of rib units, each rib unit having a pair of substantially parallel faces, at least one functional surface and a leg or supporting member so that, when arranged in a predetermined, face-to-face relationship and secured by means of one or more connecting rods, the functional surface of each rib unit defines a surface of a furniture piece, such as a chair or bench seat and back support, while each leg or supporting member is offset from the neighboring leg or support member according to a pattern which, when combined with the legs or supporting members of the other rib units, provides support for the entire furniture piece and its occupant.

# 2. Description of the Prior Art:

There are numerous methods for the construction of furniture from rigid materials, such as wood, metal or plastic, and a similar multitude of furniture pieces characteristic of each method of construction. In particular, this invention relates to a type of furniture constructed from a series of repeating rib units linked or secured by means of one or more connecting rods. Within this particular art, two prior patents may be of interest.

United States Patent Number 4,235,473 discloses an item of furniture constructed from a series of rigid rib units and one or more connecting rods and spacers so that, when the rib units, connecting rods and spacers are arranged and secured in the correct order, the rib units form a functional surface, such as a chair seat or back, and a support structure to bear the weight of the furniture item and its occupant. The '473 patent, however, discloses only one means for providing a sufficient support structure. According to the '473 patent, the support structure of the furniture is achieved by alternating between two or three different types of rib units, each of which has a configuration distinct from the other(s). When these two or three different types or configurations of rib units are arranged and secured in alternating fashion, the combined contributions of each type of rib unit are sufficient to support the entire weight of the chair or bench and its occupant(s). Note, however, that each of the rib units must be of sufficient width and strength, the gaps between rib units of sufficient narrowness, and the connecting rod of sufficient rigidity so that the supporting structure does not collapse when force is applied to the furniture in a direction which is both downward and perpendicular to the plane of the rib units. The '473 patent does not disclose any other means for achieving a sufficient supporting structure, such as one using narrower or more flexible rib units, a more flexible connecting rod, or only one type or configuration of rib unit.

Similarly, United States Patent Number 3,834,759 discloses an item of furniture constructed from a series of rigid rib units made of wire and one or more connecting rods and spacers so that, when the rib units, connecting rods and spacers are arranged and secured, the rib units again form a rigid functional surface, such as a chair seat and back, and a support structure to bear the weight of the furniture item and its occupant. The '759 patent, however, also discloses only one means for providing a sufficient structure to support the weight of the furniture item and its occupant(s). According to the '759 patent, support for the rib units is achieved by using one or more curved connecting rods. The curvature of the connecting rods places each of the rib units in a vertical plane slightly differently from any of its neighbors. When arranged in this way, the resulting structure is better enabled to support forces which are directed downwards and toward the side of the chair, since any force directed both downwards and toward the side of the chair will not collapse the structure but instead will be supported by the rib units which are not perpendicular to the sidewards component of the force. In other words, the curvature of the connecting rods contributes significantly to the ability of the resulting structure to bear loads and forces when the item is used as a piece of furniture. Note, however, that, without the benefit of a curved connecting rod, the resulting structure would simply collapse when a sufficient force is applied in a direction which is both downward and toward the side of the chair, that is, perpendicular to the plane of the rib units. The '759 patent does not disclose any other means for achieving a sufficient supporting structure, such as one using parallel (rather than radial) rib units.

It is an object of this invention to provide a piece of furniture constructed of a

plurality of similarly configures rib units, one or more connecting rods and means for spacing and securing the rib units along the length of the connecting rod or rods.

It is a further object of this invention to provide an improved means for supporting the weight of the piece of furniture and its occupant(s) without the use of two or three different types of rib units and without requiring the use of curved connecting rods.

It is a further object of this invention to provide a piece of furniture which is easily manufactured, assembled and shipped, in that the piece of furniture is constructed primarily from rib units of a similar configuration.

Other objects will become apparent from the description of this invention, as described and claimed below.

# Description of the Invention

## 1. Brief Summary of the Invention:

The furniture piece comprises a plurality of rib units, each rib unit having a pair of substantially parallel faces, at least one functional surface and a leg or supporting member so that, when arranged in a predetermined, face-to-face relationship and secured by means of one or more connecting rods, the functional surface of each rib unit defines a surface of a furniture piece, such as a chair or bench seat and back support, while each leg or supporting member is offset from the neighboring leg or support member according to a pattern which, when combined with the legs or supporting members of the other rib units, provides support for the entire furniture piece and its occupant.

# 2. Brief Description of the Drawings

The invention will be further described in connection with the accompanying drawings, in which:

Figure 1 is a front side perspective view of a furniture piece built in accordance with the present invention;

Figure 2 is a front elevational view thereof;

Figure 3 is a left side elevational view thereof, the opposite side being a mirror image;

Figure 4 is a bottom elevational view thereof;

Figure 5 is a top elevational view thereof;

## 3. Detailed Description of the Drawings:

Before explaining the invention in detail, it is to be understood that the invention is not limited in its application to the detail of construction and arrangement of parts illustrated in the drawings, since the invention is capable of other embodiments. It is also to be understood that the phraseology or terminology employed is for the purpose of description only and not of limitation. Moreover, the exact shape of the furniture piece and components thereof shown in the accompanying drawings is for the purpose of description only and not of limitation.

Referring to the drawings in which like parts are designated by the same number throughout the various figures, Figure 1 shows a front side perspective view of a furniture piece designed and constructed in accordance with the teachings of the present invention. The rib units are constructed of any rigid material suitable for the purpose of making furniture, such as wood,

metal or different types of plastic. The number and exact shape of the rib units is not critical and is a matter of design choice. Each rib unit is a substantially uniform thickness and presents two substantially parallel sides, although these qualities are not critical to the invention and are also a matter of design choice.

As shown in Figure 1 in front side perspective view and in Figure 3 in side elevational view, each rib unit comprises at least one functional surface and at least one supporting member. In the embodiment piece illustrated in these drawings, each rib unit provides a seat surface, a back support surface, and a single supporting leg. The functional surfaces of each of the rib units are substantially identical, so that when they are secured in the proper face-to-face orientation, the functional surfaces of the combined rib units define a chair seat and back support. Making the functional surfaces of each of the rib units substantially identical produces a furniture piece in which the functional surfaces are flat in the direction perpendicular to the plane of the rib units, as shown in the illustrated embodiment. However, it is also possible to vary the shape of the functional surfaces of each rib unit slightly from one rib unit to the next to produce a furniture piece having a contoured or dished seating surface or back support. The exact shape of the functional surface of each of the rib units is not critical and is a matter of design choice. As will be apparent to one skilled in the art, the functional surface of each rib unit can be shaped to produce a number of furniture items, such as chairs, benches, loveseats, tables, beds and other items of furniture.

In order to maintain the individual rib units in a predetermined face-to-face relationship, there are provided one or more interconnecting means and a plurality of spacer means. The interconnecting means may be a simple rod, such as a dowel of wood, metal or

plastic, passing through the individual rib units and spacer means, in which case the rib units and the spacer means are provided with registered holes to admit the passage of the dowel, with the dowel being locked into position either by friction, adhesive or a conventional fastener such as nails or screws. Other interconnecting means are possible, such as using one or more nuts and bolts, again passing through registered holes in the individual rib units and spacer means. It is not necessary that the interconnecting means pass through holes in the spacer means but generally this is desirable for esthetic reasons. The spacer means may be one or more pieces of substantially any shape and material which are of a size sufficient to be placed between each of the individual rib units and keep the individual rib units spaced apart when the rib units are interconnected. Alternatively, the spacer means may be a part of the rib unit or interconnecting means, such as a plurality of grooves, notches or teeth situated along the length of the interconnecting means and shaped to lock each of the individual rib units into a particular location along the interconnecting means. As will be apparent to one skilled in the art, a number of different means for interconnecting and spacing the individual rib units are possible using presently available methods.

There is also shown in Figures 1 and 4 a supporting leg for each rib unit. The supporting leg or member associated with each rib unit is offset in position from the neighboring leg or member according to a pattern which, when combined with the legs or members of other rib units, provides support for the entire piece of furniture and its occupant. In particular, Figure 4 shows the bottom of each supporting leg or member forming a curving, approximately sinusoidal pattern along the length of the furniture piece. This pattern is achieved by varying the angle formed between the supporting member of each of the rib units and the floor. Besides the



pattern illustrated, other patterns are possible which provide the support necessary to bear the weight of the piece of furniture and its occupant(s), if any. The exact shape of the supporting legs or members of each of the rib units is not critical and is a matter of design choice. As will be apparent to one skilled in the art, the supporting legs or members can be arranged in a number of different patterns which are suited to supporting the weight of the furniture and its occupant.

It will be apparent that the foregoing method of construction is well suited to mass production since the individual rib units of each furniture piece can be produced in large quantities and interchanged. It will also be apparent to those skilled in the art that the foregoing method of construction of a piece of furniture is well suited to producing a low volume shipping package, since the rib units can be disassembled and shipped in flat package by nesting the rib units against each other.

It is also apparent that numerous modifications of this construction technique can be employed in order to define and construct a wide variety of furniture pieces. In particular, the furniture piece illustrated herein is a bench and has been presently solely for the purposes of exemplification. However, there are numous other furniture items which can be constructed in accordance with the teachings of this invention, such as a chair, a table, a stool, a bed and other items, without departing from the spirit of the invention.

Although a detailed description of the invention has been provided, it is not intended that such details be limitations upon the scope of the invention. It will be obvious to those skilled in the art that various modifications and substitutions may be made without departing from the spirit and scope of the invention as set forth in the following claims.



## Claims

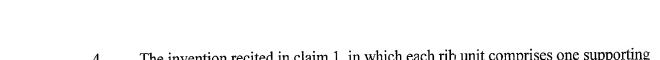
What is claimed is:

1. A furniture piece, which comprises:

a plurality of rib units, each of which has (i) at least one functional surface such that a composite of the functional surfaces of the plurality of rib units defines at least one functional surface of said furniture piece, and (ii) at least one supporting member configured according to a pattern which varies from one rib unit to another such that a composite of the supporting members provides support for said furniture piece and its occupants;

interconnecting means for securing each of the rib units to the others; and spacer means for situating each of the rib units in a position which, when secured by the interconnecting means, is separated from each of the adjoining rib units.

- 2. The invention recited in claim 1, in which each rib unit comprises two functional surfaces such that a composite of the functional surfaces of the plurality of rib units defines a seat surface and a back support surface.
- 3. The invention recited in claim 1, in which each rib unit comprises one supporting member configured according to a pattern which varies from one rib unit to another such that a composite of the supporting members forms a substantially sinusoidal shape.



- 4. The invention recited in claim 1, in which each rib unit comprises one supporting member configured according to a pattern which varies from one rib unit to another such that a composite of the supporting members forms a substantially elliptical shape.
- 5. The invention recited in claim 1, in which each rib unit comprises one supporting member configured according to a pattern which varies from one rib unit to another such that a composite of the supporting members forms a substantially circular shape.
- 6. The invention recited in claim 1, in which the interconnecting means comprises one or more rods passing through each rib unit and spacer means.
  - 7. The invention recited in claim 1, in which each rib unit is made of wood.
  - 8. The invention recited in claim 1, in which each rib unit is made of metal.
  - 9. The invention recited in claim 1, in which each rib unit is made of plastic.

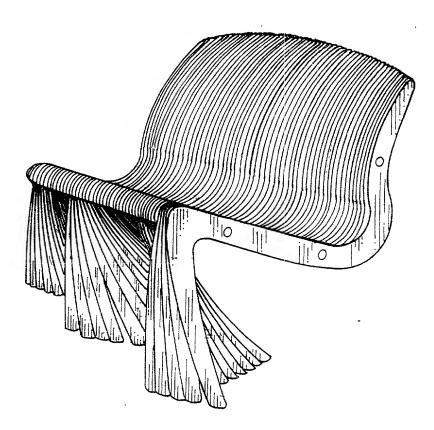


Fig. 1

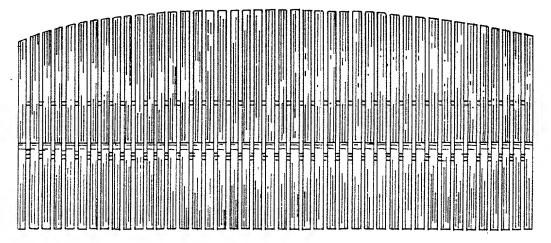


Fig. 2

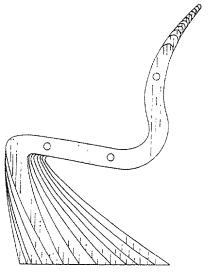


Fig. 3

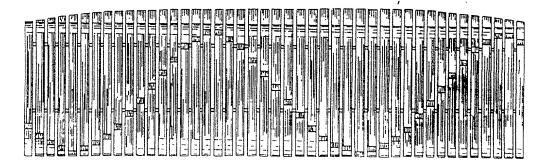


Fig. 4

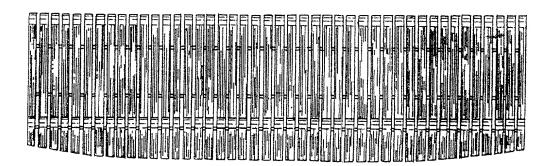


Fig. 5

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**DECLARATION FOR UTILITY OR** DESIGN PATENT APPLICATION

(37 CFR 1.63) 

> Submitted with Initial Filing

Declaration Submitted after Initial Filing (surcharge (37 CFR 1.16 (e)) required)

Attorney Docket Number								
First Named Inventor	Tiffany, H.R.							
COMPLETE IF KNOWN								
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Filing Date	,							
Group Art Unit								
Examiner Name	,							

As a	below named inve	entor, I hereby declare that:										
My	My residence, post office address, and citizenship are as stated below next to my name.											
I believe I am the original, first and sole inventor (if only one name is listed below) or an original, first and joint inventor (if plural names are listed below) of the subject matter which is claimed and for which a pagent is sought on the invention entitled:												
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	is attached hereti OR											
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[Page 1 of 2]

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# DECLARATION — Utility or Design Patent Application

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# **DECLARATION**

# ADDITIONAL INVENTOR(S) Supplemental Sheet Page <u>1</u> of <u>1</u>

Name of Additional Joint Inventor, if any:					A petition has been filed for this unsigned inventor					
Given Name (first and middle (if any))						Family Na	me or	Sumam	9	
Barbara Ya	aseen			Ti	ffan	У				
inventor's Signature	Borbara &	pse	en!	Ti	Hen	1		Oat		4/26/00
Residence: City	Point Pleasan	t Sta	e PA		Country	USA		Citizen	ship	USA
Post Office Address	27_Cafferty Rd.									
Post Office Address										
City		3ta	e		ZIP	18950	Country	,		
Name of Addition	Name of Additional Joint Inventor, if any:  A petition has been filed for this unsigned inventor									
Given Na	me (first and middle (if any	1)				Family Nai	me or S	umame		
inventor's Signature			<del> </del>					Da	ite	
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Name of Addition	al Joint Inventor, if an	y:			A petitlo	n has been file	d for thi	s unsigi	ned in	ventor
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# **POWER OF ATTORNEY OR AUTHORIZATION OF AGENT,** NOT ACCOMPANYING **APPLICATION**

: 23 171

Application Number				
Filing Date				
First Named Inventor	Tiffany,	H.R.	III	
Group Art Unit				
Examiner Name	,			
Attorney Docket Number				

I hereby appoint:		T			<del></del>				
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	SIGNATURE of Applicant or Assign	ee of l	Record						
Name H.	obert Tiffany III	<del></del> -							
Signature ////a	Tall	·		······································					
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